WYCOMBE WAND. 2, MAIDSTONE UTD. 3

PUNCHLESS Wycombe surrendered two valuable points to lowly Maidstone at Loakes Park on Saturday. Those points could have put Wycombe in second position in the Isthmian League, instead they boosted Maidstone (writes GRAHAM SHARPE).

From the start, it was obvious that the expected Wycombe superiority would not materialise, as Maidstone chased everything enthusiastically, and were rewarded with a goal after 19 minutes when Long cut out a pass on the centre-line, pushed through to McGibbon, who laid on a perfect defence-splitting ball for Hanley to run onto and beat the oncoming Maskell.

Wycombe had been fractionally on top, and Faulkner was just wide with only Trice to beat after a Samuels pass in the 18th minute. But with Horseman playing a strange link-man role, the attack was not effective. And when Wanderers equalised it was a gift from Maidstone. An astonishing back pass went straight to Faulkner, two minutes after the Maidstone goal, and, well inside the area, he netted with ease.

Wycombe netted again six minutes later through Samuels, but he was well offside, and the half finished with the eager Maidstone outfit deservedly holding their own against their off-colour opponents.

At the beginning of the second-half, Wycombe began to show something of their proper form, and in the 53rd minute, Merrick gathered a Baker corner in the left side of the area, and hammered in a shot from an acute angle, which Trice could only push up into the roof of the net.

Could Wycombe now assert their superiority? The answer was no, and although Horseman put the ball in the net two minutes later he was offside and Maidstone equalised after an hour when the tiny Osborne was fouled. And up stepped Angel to lash a free-kick past Maskell.

Osborne buzzed all over the pitch, upsetting the home defence, and after 71 minutes he put over a cross which McAllister took on the right of the area, and pulled the ball across the goal where Long beat Maskell for it and won the match for Maidstone.

Wycombe : Maskell; Thomas, Gale; Lailey, Rundle, Horseman; Worley, Baker, Faulkner, Samuels, Merrick. Sub.: Busby.

Maidstone : Trice; McAllister, Evans; Wladyslaw, Riddy, Denham; McGibbon, Angel, Long, Hanley, Osborne. Sub : Scott.